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ABSTRACT

The Orange County, Florida, public school system conducted a review of its Project Development Services (PDS) to determine its organizational operation and performance. PDS helps increase supplementary school funding from federal, state, local, and private foundation sources. The evaluation of PDS revealed several areas of concern: meeting needs identified by district- and school-level consumer groups, making PDS documents supportive of programs, improving communication between PDS and the schools and among PDS staff members, and systematically reviewing PDS performance. Also, future plans for PDS reorganization should include a review of the staffing needs relative to workload. PDS objectives should be rewritten to address the needs identified by school administrators. A manual for writing grant proposals should be developed, and a log of current district projects should be maintained. Roles within the PDS should be clarified, and procedures to guide grant administrators should be developed. A systematic assessment of the quality and productivity of PDS should be implemented, including evaluations of each staff member. PDS leadership should be strengthened, equipment purchases should be closely monitored, and excess equipment transferred to schools. (JPT)

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ED357472

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT
June 1992

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Technology and Media Services

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PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
PROGRAM EVALUATION

Executive Summary

Prepared by Roberta Rodriguez Thomas

June 1992

Project Development Services (PDS) was authorized by the school board to assist in meeting identified needs by increasing the amount of supplementary funding from federal, state, local, and private-foundation sources. While 11 team members were originally involved in the evaluation, that number has been reduced to 9 with the commensurate reduction in education funding. For the duration of the evaluation, PDS consisted of two units: Project Development and Project Administration.

Interviews and observations were the primary means used to gather evaluation data. Interviews were conducted with PDS staff members, school administrators, grant reviewers, and PDS administrators from other large school districts.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The evaluation of the organizational operation and delivery of services by PDS revealed the following concerns: (a) the need for the organization of the work unit to better meet the needs identified by district and school-level consumer groups, (b) the need for the development of program documents to be more supportive of program functions, and (c) the need for the improvement of communication between PDS and the schools and among PDS staff members. The need for a systematic means of conducting an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of work provided by PDS was also identified.

In August 1992, the responsibilities for supervising and developing the leadership within the PDS unit were reassigned to the newly appointed assistant to the superintendent. By way of this supervisory relationship, the concerns identified in this evaluation will be addressed.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Seven questions were used to evaluate Project Development Services (PDS). Each question along with the primary findings and recommendations is included in this section.

1. What were the results of previous status reports, and how do they relate to the present evaluation?

   Findings

   The role of Project Development Services has changed since its inception in 1977. Since that time, both the state and federal governments have reduced the amount of grant monies available to school districts, making the acquisition of funds more difficult and competitive. As a result, to be successful PDS units are required to focus more energies on policy analysis to network across various districts, at the state level, and at the federal level; to use grant review feedback information; and to write grants for a more competitive forum.

The recommendations made by the independent evaluator in the 1979 report continue to be issues of concern to be addressed in the current evaluation. They are addressed as (a) the need to become more familiar with the planning and funding necessary to realize the goals of the various work sites, (b) the need todevelop a systematic means of reviewing annually and longitudinally the funding needs of the work sites related to work-site planning, (c) the need to review and reorganize Project Development Services based on the necessary functions for PDS identified at the work sites, (d) the need to establish communication about PDS to all work sites, and (e) the need to establish the role of the PDS staff as facilitators in the acquisition of funds for the Orange County Public Schools.

Recommendations

None needed

2. What was the impact of the 1990-91 OCPS reorganization on Project Development Services, and how does this reorganization relate to the present evaluation?

Findings

The 1990-91 reorganization of the Project Development Services (PDS) section was found to have minimal impact on the way the functions of the section were carried out. The impetus for change was viewed as being external to PDS with little input from the members.

Communication between the Project Development (PD) and Project Administration (PA) units was reported to be limited; some communication was reported to have been initiated by the PD unit relative to writing the budget section of grants.

Very little individual direction and group leadership were reported to be provided to members within the Project Administration (PA) unit. Without recognized leadership within the PA unit, members reported activities which suggested attempts on their part to seek leadership from other members of the PDS section.

Recommendation

Future plans for reorganizing Project Development Services should include a review of the manpower staffing needs relative to the functions of the work unit.

3. Are the program objectives appropriate as determined by the needs of the Orange County Public Schools?

Findings

The following program objectives were reported for PDS:

a. To develop, implement, and maintain a grant proposal development system

b. To develop, implement, and maintain a management and assessment system for funded projects

c. To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and funding agencies on the federal, state, and local levels

d. To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and public service agencies with whom the OCPS works collaboratively

e. To develop alternative approaches for predicting and determining educational trends in the context of the political arena and other intervening factors in order to advocate for and fund the educational needs of the OCPS

f. To identify new sources of funding for educational needs

g. To develop a team approach for the provision of Project Development Services

While each of the seven program objectives stated for Project Development Services was found to address the ongoing operation of PDS, only one objective was found to address a need identified by school administrators. This need addresses identifying sources of funding for educational purposes and providing information about these sources to OCPS consumers in an expedient manner.

The other two needs identified by school administrators were not found to be addressed by the program objectives or operational activities related to the objectives. These needs are stated in the following:

(1) There is a need to identify the educational purposes for which funding is sought for each work location (e.g., school-site, district office, or support program). The effort for which funding is sought should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the work-location strategic plan.

(2) There is a need to identify the level of expertise of each work-location in regards to seeking financial resources.

Recommendation

The objectives of Project Development Services should be rewritten to address the needs identified by school administrators.

4. Are there satisfactory operational guidelines, and are they available to all personnel in the program?

Findings

Three types of operational guidelines were reviewed. The Guidelines for the Superintendent's Competitive Grant were found to be satisfactory; however, workshop participants reported that the assistance provided by these guidelines could not be generalized to other grant-writing situations.

The Special Projects Administration Catalogue which is a large, cumbersome collection of very brief descriptions of district projects from the previous year was not found to serve a useful purpose. It does offer a historical review; however, similar information is maintained on a computer data base and could be downloaded to disk or hard copy on an annual basis. The cost of typing and copying the document did not appear to be justified by its use.

The Grant and Special Project Administration Manual identified that the Project Administration unit with Project Development Services (PA/PDS) was duplicating

almost all of the efforts performed by Project Administration within Business Services (PA/BS). Concerns with the document related to inconsistencies with practices and procedures of PA/BS and how information was stated.

Recommendations

1. A manual to guide the writing of grants, in general, which is modeled after the Guidelines for the Superintendent's Competitive Grant, should be developed.

2. A log of current district projects should be maintained on a computer data base and downloaded annually so that a historical record can be maintained. The publication of the voluminous Special Projects Administration Catalogue should be discontinued.

3. The working relationship between the Project Administration section within Business Services and the project administration activities performed by Project Development Services should be clarified to eliminate the duplication of services and the confusion regarding information communicated to project administrators. It is strongly recommended that overlapping services be performed by the Project Administration section within the Business Services Team.

4. Procedures to guide project administrators in the administration of grants should be developed. The current Grant and Special Project Administration Manual should be referenced as a resource document. This responsibility should be addressed by the Business Services Team.

5. Is Project Development Services, consisting of the Project Development and Project Administration units, implementing services according to the PDS design?

Findings

To determine if Project Development Services (PDS) was implementing services according to the design, the degree to which PDS met the seven stated objectives was investigated. A review of the results suggested that school administrators are not aware of all the functions performed by PDS. A finding of Evaluation Question 3 was that the PDS objectives do not address two of the three needs addressed by the schools. This would suggest developing a closer communication with the schools and a systematic means to obtain input from the school level regarding PDS functions. As recommended earlier, the objective relating to project administration should be discontinued as a function of PDS, and the relationships between and among members of the PDS staff should be strengthened.

Input from the state-level grant reviewers indicated the need for OCPS grants to focus on student outcomes, to write from the school perspective, and to include the name of a contact person who had specific knowledge of the grant submitted. State-level foundation representatives reported a desire to have school districts identify needs school-by-school and community-by-community. This latter request will be met through the strategic planning process for school improvement.

Recommendations

Recommendations implied in the findings section of this evaluation question which were stated earlier are not repeated here.

1. Closer communication and a systematic means to obtain input from the school level regarding PDS functions should be developed.

2. Efforts should be taken to develop grant applications for schools which are unique, reflecting the individuality of schools.

3. Grant application contact persons who have specific knowledge of the grant submitted should be identified on the grant applications.

6. What means are used to incorporate an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of work provided by the Project Development Services staff, and how is this information used?

Findings

A systematic means of conducting an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of work provided by the Project Development Services section was not reported by the staff members interviewed.

Recommendations

1. A systematic means of conducting an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of work provided by the Project Development Services section should be implemented.

2. Special efforts should be taken via the assessment process to communicate a respect for the individual worth of each staff member in the Project Development Services section.

7. Is the environment -- including management, facilities, equipment, and materials and supplies -- satisfactory for the provision of Project Development Services?

Findings

While the facilities, equipment, and supplies and materials were found to be satisfactory for the provision of Project Development Services, the concerns of the staff members strongly suggest that the leadership efforts within PDS need to be improved. Project Development Services staff members reported an excess of equipment which could be better utilized if given to schools. The purchase of expensive equipment by the PDS section is not closely monitored.

Recommendations

Recommendations implied in the findings section of this evaluation question which were stated earlier are not repeated here.

1. Efforts should be taken to strengthen the leadership within Project Development Services.

2. Excess equipment located at Project Development Services should be transferred to schools.

3. Purchases of equipment within Project Development Services should be closely monitored.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

Four purposes were identified for conducting the evaluation of Project Development Services. They are listed in the following:

To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the functions conducted by Project Development Services

To assess the effect of district-wide reorganization and the emergence of team development on Project Development Services

To determine the level of satisfaction of Project Development Services consumers and the needs determined by the consumers

To determine the ability of Project Development Services to maintain a continuously supportive role in providing supplementary funding to meet the needs identified by the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS)

RELATED DISTRICT GOALS

Goal 1: To enable all students to succeed in school and their chosen careers to develop positive self-esteem, and to be responsible citizens

Goal 2: To staff schools and district-level departments with quality personnel and improve the job performance and job satisfaction of all employees

Goal 3: To enhance involvement in the educational process and communications among students, staff, parents, the school board, and the community; and to improve multicultural relations district-wide

Goal 4: To improve the learning environment by providing appropriate support services to schools

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Legal Basis

Project Development Services was authorized by the school board to assist in meeting identified district needs by increasing the amount of supplementary funding from federal, state, local, and private foundation sources.

Historical Perspective

The creation of Project Development Services was not a response to laws or legislative mandates. However, it was a response to educational need. Writing in the Office of Project Development Status Report in 1979, Joseph Marinelli, the first administrator for project development reported the following:

> It is becoming increasingly apparent, in view of the escalating inflationary costs of modern education and shrinking tax dollars ... that local educational agencies must out of necessity intensify their efforts to secure funding for desired educational services from sources outside their respective districts.

> The state and national competition for these alternative supplemental funds, which are usually allocated on a limited and discretionary basis, is severe. This competition has generally ranged from one proposal funded out of every two submitted to one out of every eighteen submitted. Such intense competition for discretionary monies has prompted the relatively recent emergence of "educational entrepreneurship" in the form of highly organized funds-seeking and resource development capabilities like the district's Project Development operation. (p. 1)

Dr. Marinelli was hired in 1977 to consult with the OCPS in order to study and draft the management design for district project development. After commencing full-time work with the district as the Assistant to the Superintendent for Project Development, Dr. Marinelli, with the assistance of Ron Atwood, Specialist for Project Development, completed the design. By January of 1978, the office had hired two CETA-funded program assistants to assist in the various aspects of project development, primarily gathering data for proposals and editing proposal drafts.

A review of the 1979 Status Report indicates that a multitude of functions were conducted within the Office of Project Development. This office was responsible for coordinating the entire discretionary grant procurement and proposal development process for the district as well as many other, related activities. These activities are enumerated below.

1. To coordinate and develop project concepts
2. To select concept-team members and to create a team-approach for the development of each individual project proposal
3. To coordinate the appropriate administrative review and approval of potential grants
4. To write the grant proposal with the assistance of district staff, concept teams, and, on occasion, outside consultants
5. To provide technical assistance to proposal-writing teams
6. To edit and polish proposals
7. To review proposal content and form
8. To revise proposals if necessary
9. To process proposals for approval
10. To coordinate the negotiations for all funded projects
11. To conduct staff development activities for proposal writers and reviewers
12. To formulate a data base for project development compiling a current summary of federal and state funded projects ongoing in OCPS
13. To provide technical assistance to other district funding efforts
14. To develop and publish a comprehensive Project Development Manual

15. To monitor all funded projects

16. To establish a master management plan for proposal development

17. To identify new and upcoming grant programs and plan future applications over an extended period of time

18. To maintain and facilitate district legislative liaison including the development of the district legislative position statements

19. To review and evaluate progress made by the Office of Project Development and the status relative to specific operational accomplishments

The success of the Office of Project Development for the first year was reported in several ways. In that first year, 31 grant proposals were written and 24 were funded, yielding a funding rate of 77%. The total for new funds generated by the 24 grants was $2,056,741 or approximately $89,443 per grant. Because of the efforts undertaken by the Office of Project Development, the district discretionary funds more than doubled over the previous year's $850,000, and 24 new programs and 14 staff members were added to the OCPS. Dr. Marinelli reported that supplemental funding brought in from sources outside the district was found to be especially crucial to more specialized district services such as exceptional education, remediation, school lunch programs, vocational education, and facility maintenance.

Since the inception of the Office of Project Development, both the state and federal governments have followed the earlier predicted pattern of reducing the amount of aid to school districts. One of the early attempts to reduce federal aid for education was the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act of the Reagan administration. This legislation which began to have an impact on the states in the early 80's was intended to "block" grants thereby reducing the competition and allowing for a more equitable distribution of funds across the states. The result, however, was to reduce the amount of available funds to all states when many of the previously allocated discretionary dollars were "blocked" together.

In Florida, the sales tax and ad valorem tax on property are used almost exclusively to fund education. For years educational economists and school finance officers have expressed concerns that these two sources of funds did not grow commensurate with the rapidly increasing population in Florida nor did these sources grow in proportion to reported economic growth. Even with the advent of the Florida Lottery, the future of educational funding in Florida has remained a major concern. As the 1991-92 school year begins, the state contribution to the Base Student Allocation was $205.00 less than it was in the previous school year.

With the lack of funding of education having a major impact on Florida schools, the need for school districts to identify and acquire additional funds and to further develop their "educational entrepreneurship" has continued. The current Project Development Services (PDS) consists of 11 staff members who work

> (a) to develop, implement, and maintain a grant proposal development system; (b) to develop, implement, and maintain a management and assessment system for funded projects; and (c) to establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the Orange County Public Schools and funding agencies on the federal, state, and local levels. (OCPS, 1991, p. 3)

These three major functions, although listed as discrete components are somewhat interdependent. For example, in order to submit a grant proposal, the liaison process must be accessed to determine the receptivity of the educational and political funding influences. Once a grant has been funded, the management and assessment system for funded projects begins to work with the project implementation staff.

> The coordination of proposal development processes in the district is a primary role of the office. Among other duties, staff [members] of Project Development Services (a) identify potential funding sources and match these with district needs and objectives, (b) write proposals, (c) provide technical assistance to other proposal writers, (d) edit, (e) review, (f) amend, and (g) process for approval, all competitive categorical grant proposals. (OCPS, 1991, p. 4)

A comparison of the current and original status reports indicates that of the 19 major activities listed as the responsibilities of the original Office of Project Development, one activity has changed significantly and one activity has been added. The changed activity relates to the legislative liaison work. In 1979, the stated activity was "to maintain and facilitate district legislative liaison including the development of the district legislative position statements." While the PDS office must still maintain and facilitate district legislative liaison relationships for the purposes stated earlier, the responsibility for preparing the legislative position statement no longer lies with the leadership of PDS. This responsibility now lies with the Associate Superintendent for Planning and Governmental Relations, who leads the team to which PDS is assigned.

The activity added addresses the need to look beyond the more traditional sources of funding to new and creative ways of meeting educational needs. It focuses on expanding the interpretation of funding through collaborative efforts to include concepts such as in-kind services and more efficient utilization of time.

The current efforts of PDS, not unlike the original Office of Project Development model, were reported to be conducted from the philosophical basis that <u>teaming</u>, or rather the involvement of team members, is more productive than PDS staff members working in isolation. While the PDS staff members are skilled grants-persons, they recognize that the more specific knowlege base and expertise of the content-area personnel are critical for accurately developing the project concept and for describing that concept for the grant proposal. With this approach, the 1990-91 PDS status report reflects that staff members either wrote or assisted with the preparation of 72 proposals and monitored projects representing over $36 million.

<u>Program Personnel</u>

<u>Project Development (6)</u>

A. Senior Administrator for Project Development (1) - This person is responsible to the Associate Superintendent for the Planning and Governmental Relations Team. He is responsible for overseeing that the functions of PDS are carried out in both the project development and project administration units. The basic functions include maintaining a standard grants-development process, procedures for the administration of grants and contracts and other necessary support systems to secure funding from federal, state, and private sources. He is also responsible for developing PDS vision and coordinating and developing direction and resources (e.g., teaming efforts) to attain that vision.

B. Specialist for Project Development (2) - These persons are responsible to the Senior Administrator for Project Development and assist in securing funding from federal, state, and private sources. The basic functions are to prioritize and process funding information, write and process grant proposals and contracts, supervise proposal writing staff, and coordinate the tracking of funded projects.

C. Administrative Technical Associate for Project Development (1) - This person is responsible to the Senior Administrator for Project Development and assists in securing funding from federal, state, and private sources. The basic functions are to review funding source publications, prepare briefs and proposal abstracts, write and process grant proposals, provide technical assistance to other grant writers, and track implementation of funded proposals.

D. Executive Assistant for Project Development (1) - This person is responsible to the Senior Administrator for Project Development and assists in securing funding from federal, state, and private agencies. The basic functions are to review funding source publications, prepare briefs and proposal abstracts, assist in writing grant proposals, and facilitate production and duplication activities.

E. Associate Secretary for Project Development (1) - This person is responsible to the Senior Administrator for Project Development and assists in providing support to all project development functions.

Project Administration (5)

F. Senior Manager for Project Administration (1) - This person is responsible to the Senior Administrator for Project Development. The basic function is to monitor state and federal categorical programs to ensure that appropriate statutes, rules, regulations, and guidelines are followed.

G. Senior Specialist for Project Administration (1) - This person is responsible to the Senior Manager for Project Administration. The basic function is to assist in the coordination of all management aspects of each funded grant contract.

H. Administrative Technical Associate for Project Administration (3) - The ATAs are responsible to the Senior Manager for Project Administration. The basic function is to assist in all technical aspects of maintaining an inventory of grants, reviewing and reporting on project expenditures, and updating grant award files.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The following program objectives were developed by the Senior Manager for Project Development Services with assistance from the Program Evaluator.

a. To develop, implement, and maintain a grant proposal development system

b. To develop, implement, and maintain a management and assessment system for funded projects

c. To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and funding agencies on the federal, state, and local levels

d. To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and public service agencies with whom the OCPS works collaboratively

e. To develop alternative approaches for predicting and determining educational trends in the context of the political arena and other intervening factors in order to advocate for and fund the educational needs of the OCPS

f. To identify new sources of funding for educational needs

g. To develop a team approach for the provision of Project Development Services

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions were developed in accordance with policies established in the Comprehensive Plan for Program Evaluation (OCPS, 1988), a district-developed series of planning activities, guidelines, and timelines for effective district program evaluations. The steps were as follows:

1. The evaluator became familiar with the literature relative to the program via the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), the Educational Research Service, Inc. (ERS), and information provided by the Senior Administrator, Senior Manager, and staff members.

2. The evaluator sought information regarding the evaluation from the Associate Superintendent for Planning and Governmental Relations who administered the delivery of Project Development Services.

3. Next, the evaluator met with the Senior Administrator to discuss the pending evaluation and possible relevant issues.

4. The evaluator drafted a set of evaluation questions which were discussed with the Associate Superintendent for Planning and Governmental Relations and the Senior Administrator.

5. The evaluator drafted an evaluation design for the evaluation of Project Development Services. The evaluation questions along with the design were presented to the 11 members of the PDS section.

6. Revisions, additions, and deletions were made, and the resulting evaluation questions were submitted to the Superintendent and his administrative staff for examination. Following their approval, the questions were finalized.

The following evaluation questions were used to guide the evaluation:

1. What were the results of previous status reports, and how do they relate to the present evaluation?

2. What was the impact of the 1990-91 OCPS reorganization on Project Development Services, and how does this reorganization relate to the present evaluation?

3. Are the program objectives appropriate as determined by the needs of the Orange County Public Schools?

4. Are there satisfactory operational guidelines, and are they available to all personnel in the program?

5. Is Project Development Services, consisting of the Project Development and Project Administration units, implementing services according to the PDS design?

6. What means are used to incorporate an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of work provided by the Project Development Services staff, and how is this information used?

7. Is the environment – including management, facilities, equipment, and materials and supplies – satisfactory for the provision of Project Development Services?

PROCEDURES

All procedures for the evaluation of Project Development Services were developed with the assistance of the Senior Administrator. These procedures are listed in the following:

Staff interviews. (See Appendix A). The "Project Development Services Staff Interview" was used as the formal interview record for conducting interviews with 10 members of the Project Development Services section. The Senior Administrator was not interviewed in that he participated in ongoing interviews with the evaluator throughout the evaluation. The duration of the interview was approximately 45 minutes.

School administrator interviews. (See Appendix B). School administrators participated in the "PDS Consumers' Interview." Twenty-seven school administrators were interviewed; they were purposefully selected to address services delivered to elementary, middle, and high schools. The duration of the interview was approximately 30 minutes.

Grant reviewer interview. A member of the grant review team from Tallahassee was contacted and briefed regarding specific questions needing to be asked of review team members. Two review teams were interviewed: one team participated in reviewing state and federal grants while the other team reviewed requests for funds from foundations. A summary of this information was presented to the program evaluator via telephone.

Large-district telephone interview. A telephone interview was conducted with grant administration personnel in four large school districts in Florida: Broward, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, and Pinellas. The duration of the interview was approximately 30 minutes.

Observations. Observations were conducted throughout the evaluation. The evaluator asked the PDS personnel to included her in all PDS activities. Some of the activities attended included monthly staff meetings, project administration orientation meetings, grant proposal development meetings, concept paper development meetings, project review visitations, and workshops to develop grant-writing skills.

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Question 1

What were the results of previous status reports, and how do they relate to the present evaluation?

Results

Two status reports were reviewed to answer this evaluation question. The first report is dated June 6, 1979, and was prepared by Joseph Marinelli; the second report is dated 1990-91 and was prepared by Ron Atwood. Following the review of the reports, information relating to the present evaluation was identified. This information is presented below.

1979 Status Report. This report provided a statement of status of the various operations of the Project Development Office since its inception in December of 1977. Predicting that the future of education funding in Florida was bleak, Dr. Marinelli recommended that the local education agency intensify efforts to secure funding for desired educational services outside the respective district funds, and in order to compete in a highly competitive financial arena, that school districts develop the concept of educational entrepreneurship for highly organized funds-seeking and resource-development capabilities. This status report proceeds to launch the posture of the Project Development Office to be both a clearinghouse and catalyst for all district grant proposals submitted using a team approach and master management plan for the development of proposals. Through the use of the project development manual and the intensive staff development offerings prospective grant recipients were directed in the development of grant concepts and outlines.

At the time this report was submitted, the focus of the Project Development Office was on the development and submission of grants. The unit responsible for grants administration was beginning to develop.

An independent evaluation of the Project Development Office was also included in the 1979 status report. It yielded the following recommendations which relate to the current evaluation:

1. The Project Development Office must become more involved with the management team of the district.

2. The office should develop a long-range plan for review and input to meet the needs of the organization.

3. The district should provide support to the office so that professionals will not have to perform clerical responsibilities.

4. A study of the staffing needs for the Project Development Office should be conducted.

5. A concerted effort should be made by the staff of the Project Development Office to acquaint all district management personnel of the efforts made by the office.

1990-91 Status Report. This report recapitulates many of the functions previously stated in the 1979 report. Although Project Development Services was divided into two major units at the time this report was written, grants development and grants administration, the two units were not clearly described nor were the functions of the units clearly delineated. One new function listed in the latter status report states that "the office does not make decisions concerning programs to be funded or projects to be submitted for funding consideration, but screens a multitude of applications, recommending for submission the ones which best meet the criteria of a specific competition."

Conclusions

Whereas the intent of Project Development Services to be a clearinghouse and catalyst for all district grant proposals, to use a team approach for grants development, to institute a master management plan for the development of proposals, to develop a manual for grant writing, and to provide intensive staff development has continued, the financial picture for education has become more bleak. The power of the Florida Education Finance Program to adequately fund education has decreased, alternative funding sources have declined, and the competion for these funds has increased.

The recommendations made by the independent evaluator in the 1979 report continue to be issues of concern to be addressed in the current evaluation. They are addressed as (a) the need to become more familiar with the planning and funding necessary to realize the goals of the various work sites, (b) the need to develop a systematic means of reviewing annually and longitudinally the funding needs of the work sites related to work-site planning, (c) the need to review and reorganize Project Development Services based on the necessary functions for PDS identified at the work sites, (d) the need to establish communication about PDS to all work sites, and (e) the need to establish the role of the PDS staff as facilitators in the acquisition of funds for the Orange County Public Schools. These issues are addressed in the evaluation questions that follow

Recommendations

None needed.

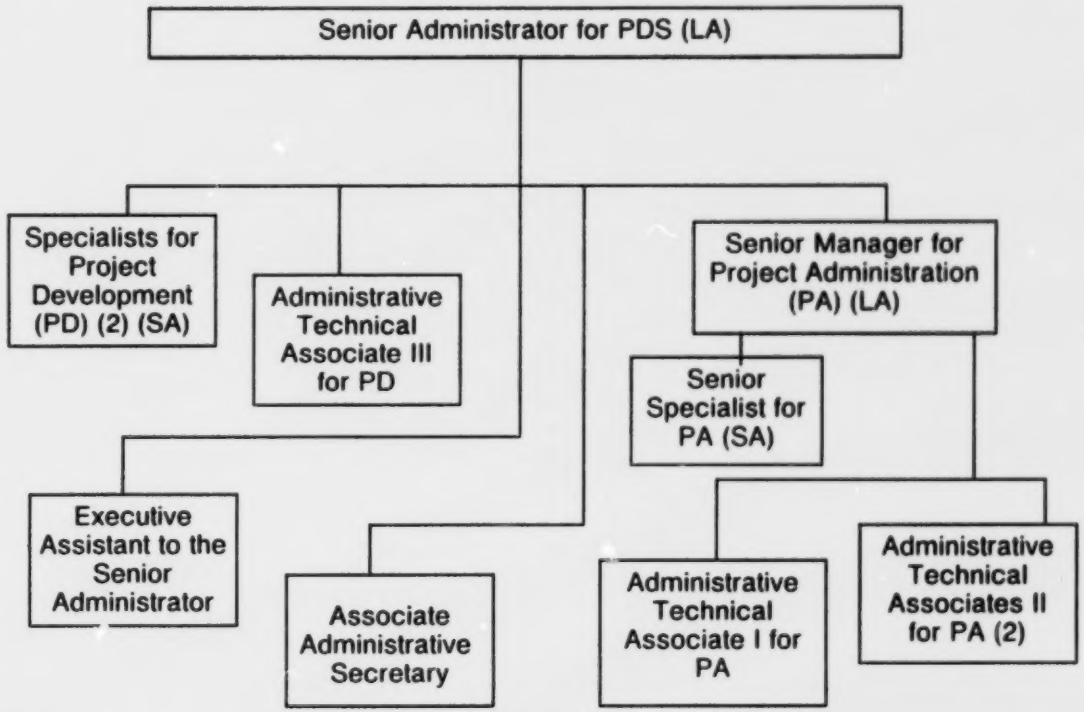
Evaluation Question 2

What was the impact of the 1990-91 OCPS reorganization on Project Development Services, and how does this reorganization relate to the present evaluation?

Results

The Project Development Services section was reassigned from the Department of Human Resources and Information Systems to the Department of Planning and Governmental Relations (PGR) during the 1990-91 school year. In the new organizational structure, the Senior Administrator for PDS reported to the Associate Superintendent for PGR; internally, the PDS organizational structure did not change. The organizational structure within PDS is defined in the figure below.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (PDS)
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART


Senior Administrator for PDS (LA)
Specialists for Project Development (PD) (2) (SA)
Administrative Technical Associate III for PD
Senior Manager for Project Administration (PA) (LA)
Senior Specialist for PA (SA)
Executive Assistant to the Senior Administrator
Associate Administrative Secretary
Administrative Technical Associate I for PA
Administrative Technical Associates II for PA (2)

Note. LA denotes line administrator. For the purpose of this discussion, the line administrator is defined as having direct line responsibilities to supervise subordinates. SA denotes staff administrator. For the purpose of this discussion, the staff administrator is defined as a support person without supervisory responsibilities. It is recognized that the definitions of line and staff administrators have been modified for use in this discussion.

Note. When comparing the grant-writing and monitoring responsibilities of four other large school districts (i.e., Broward, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, and Pinellas) with the work performed in Orange County, other districts reported one administrator-level person with the maximum of four support staff members. Two districts reported one administrator and one secretary.

The reassignment of the PDS section led to that section being more closely observed and facilitated the program evaluation. From the onset of the evaluation and beginning during the department retreat, emphasis was placed on teaming, that is, working collaboratively as a unit, and being mutually supportive within the PGR department. Aspects of teaming within PDS were studied throughout the evaluation process.

To more closely analyze the functions performed within the PDS section, each of the 10 members of the PDS staff were interviewed using the PDS Staff Interview (See Appendix A). The Senior Administrator was not interviewed; he provided information to the evaluator throughout the evaluation process. Embedded within the interview was a sociogram to determine the communication paths used by PDS members.

> The technique of sociometry was developed [by Moreno in 1959] in order to measure the structural aspects of particular groups -- that is, dyadic relationships, cliques, and leadership patterns. The method is essentially quite simple .... In its simplest form, [the interviewer] questions individuals in a group as to whom they generally associate with or would prefer to associate with in a particular activity. (Forcese & Richer, 1973, p. 62)

An analysis of the interview data indicated that there were two distinct operating units within PDS. One unit, Project Development, was responsible for researching grants, writing grant proposals, and all the associated processes required to prepare a grant proposal for submission. The other unit, Project Administration, was responsible for monitoring grants and training the grant administrator once the grant had been awarded. The managers of the two units reported having very limited communication with each other and implied that the effectiveness of the units would not be altered if two separate offices existed.

Project Administration (PA) unit. In the Project Administration (PA) unit, the Administrative Technical Associates (ATAs) and the Senior Specialist endorsed the earlier reported lack of communication between the project development and administration units. Within their unit, they reported being responsible for defining their role and learning their work with limited direction from the unit leader. Those with more experience taught those with less experience. It was also reported that work assignments were delegated individually, with little evidence of a systematic effort to equalize the work delegated. Inequities in the distribution of work was reported as a concern.

Although adopting a "new way of doing business" had been advocated in department meetings by the PD and PA leadership, members of the PA unit reported minor, if any changes as a result of the reorganization. When guidelines for reorganization were suggested to the PA staff, they were not aware of guidelines other than the realignment in the organizational chart and referred to changes being made at the behest of the Associate Superintendent for the department. Although the need for change was recognized by the members, they perceived the impetus for change to be external to the unit with little input from them. A follow-up inquiry six weeks after the initial interviews and informal queries conducted during the evaluation regarding changing the "way of doing business" or implementing a plan for change lent support to the original interview responses -- according to the PA members, "the way of doing business" had not changed in the PA unit.

Four of the five members of the PA unit reported the program objectives to be appropriate. To endorse previous reports of segregated functions cited by the PA staff members, when the five members were asked to state how they were working to achieve the four program objectives for the section, only one member reported being involved in the accomplishment of an objective which clearly lay in the domain of the PD unit. All reported being involved with developing, implementing, and maintaining a management and assessment system for funded projects; and all but one, reported being involved with developing a team approach for the provision of project develop services. Crossteaming whereby a member of the PA staff went on a school visitation with another PA staff member was not considered an effort that would result in the PA and PD units becoming more team focused. Reports of crossteaming where members of the PA and PD staff worked cooperatively in a planned manner from the beginning to the end of a project were very limited. It should be noted that the crossteaming efforts whereby the PA staff provided support to other units within the PGR department were not investigated here.

Throughout the interviews, the PA members reported having more than ample time to complete their work assignments and that they did not have enough work to do. When comparing the grant-writing and monitoring responsibilities of four other large school districts (i.e., Broward, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, and Pinellas) with the work performed in Orange County, other districts reported one administrator level person with the maximum of four support staff members.

The sociogram data showed how people within the PA unit interact with each other. When asked "If you have a concern regarding working on a project, who would you go to for assistance?" two of the three ATAs indicated that they would first seek assistance from their line administrator (i.e., the Senior Manager for PA) while the third ATA indicated circumventing the line administrator and seeking assistance from the staff administrator (i.e., the Senior Specialist) in the PA unit. The staff administrator reported that he would circumvent reporting to his line administrator first and, instead, go to the senior administrator for PDS. Regarding the interview question, the line administrator reported that he would seek assistance from his subordinate staff administrator first and report to his line administrator second.

When asked "Who do you consider the most knowledgeable person about your work?" the first choice was the line administrator and the second choice was the staff administrator for one of the ATAs; the other two ATAs reported that the staff administrator was most knowledgeable about their work. The administrators themselves cited each other.

When asked "If you have a strong feeling about something you are working on and you want to do some perception checking, to whom would you go to bounce off your ideas?" two ATAs reported the line administrator while one reported the staff administrator. The ATA who selected the staff administrator had consistently reported the staff administrator as the first choice for the previous questions. The staff administrator reported the two ATAs including the one who had cited the staff administrator consistently. The line administrator cited his line administrator as the first choice.

The next question, though part of the sociogram, addressed an issue which had been discussed in several staff meetings. Violations of work standards were the focus of attention; therefore, the evaluator incorporated the question "Whose work standards do you think would be most like your own?" with the hope that the person cited most often would be most respected relative to work standards. The ATAs cited their administrative secretary, the staff administrator cited the ATA who had cited him previously, and the line administrator cited an ATA.

When asked, "To whom would you go for personal advice?" the three ATAs did not report anyone to whom they would turn for personal advice. The staff administrator reported two ATAs and the line administrator reported his line administrator.

In the last sociogram question, the PA unit members were asked "If you had to work with three people to group brainstorm a problem and arrive at a solution, which three would you select?" The responses indicated that no one selected the line administrator for the PA unit and four members indicated that they would want the staff administrator as part of their brainstorming team.

Project Development (PD) unit. In the Project Development (PD) unit, one of the three grant writers, a specialist, and the executive assistant indicated that some aspect of their work had changed as a result of the reorganization. Both reported working with the PA unit to develop budgets for new grants and one reported being able to follow the progress of previously written grants. The other members of the unit did not report changes as a result of the reorganization. Other than the organizational chart, guidelines to assist in the reorganization process were not reported.

Three members of the PD unit reported that they were involved in activities related to the achievement of the PDS program objectives. Whereas all four objectives were reported by the executive assistant and one of the grant writers, a specialist, the other grant writer who was a specialist reported working toward the achievement of all but one of the objectives. This objective addressed developing, implementing, and maintaining a management and assessment system for funded projects which is the primary role of the PA unit. Three of the five members of the PD unit reported the program objectives to be appropriate.

The sociogram again was used to describe how people within the PD unit interact. When asked "If you have a concern regarding working on a project, who would you go to for assistance?" four members reported. Two members indicated that they would go to the line administrator while two reported that they would go to the most experienced of the grant writers. Two members indicated that they would go to the staff administrator in the PA unit if the concern addressed a budget. When asked "Who do you consider the most knowledgeable person about your work?" four of the five members reported the line administrator while the support secretary reported that one of the grant writers was most knowledgeable.

When asked "If you have a strong feeling about something you are working on and you want to do some perception checking, to whom would you go to bounce off your ideas?" four members responded. Two reported that they would go to the administrator, and two reported that they would go to the most experienced grant writer.

The next question asked "Whose work standards do you think would be most like your own?" The responses indicated that each member was cited at least once with two members indicating that "most people have similar work standards to mine." The line administrator of the PA unit was intentionally excluded by one member.

When asked "To whom would you go for personal advice?" all but one member reported that they would go to no one. One member indicated that they would go to the line administrator for PD, two of the grant writers (the Specialists), or the staff administrator of the PA unit.

In the last question, the PD members were asked "If you had to work with three people to group brainstorm a problem and arrive at a solution, which three would you select?" The responses indicated that each member of the PD unit cited at least one member of the PA unit as one of the three people chosen for brainstorming. Three of the PD unit members cited their line administrator.

Conclusions

The 1990-91 reorganization of the Project Development Services (PDS) section was found to have minimal impact on the way the functions of the section were carried out. The primary change was that the unit was moved from one department to another.

Using a sociogram embedded within an interview, the internal organization of the PDS unit was studied. Adopting a "new way of doing business" was advocated by the PDS leadership; however, the perception reported was that the necessary changes within PDS had not taken place. The impetus for change was viewed as being external to PDS with little input from the members. A plan for change was not reported.

Communication between the Project Development (PD) and Project Administration (PA) units was reported to be limited; some communication was reported to have been initiated by the PD unit relative to writing the budget section of grants.

Very little individual direction and group leadership were reported to be provided to members within the Project Administration (PA) unit. Without recognized leadership within the PA unit, members reported activities which suggested attempts on their part to seek leadership from other members of the PDS section.

Recommendation

Future plans for reorganizing Project Development Services should include a review of the manpower staffing needs relative to the functions of the work unit.

Evaluation Question 3

Are the following program objectives appropriate as determined by the needs of the Orange County Public Schools?

a. To develop, implement, and maintain a grant proposal development system

b. To develop, implement, and maintain a management and assessment system for funded projects

c. To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and funding agencies on the federal, state, and local levels

d. To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and public service agencies with whom the OCPS works collaboratively

e. To develop alternative approaches for predicting and determining educational trends in the context of the political arena and other intervening factors in order to advocate for and fund the educational needs of the OCPS

f. To identify new sources of funding for educational needs

g. To develop a team approach for the provision of Project Development Services

Results

In general the Project Development Services (PDS) staff members indicated that the program objectives were appropriate as written and submitted by the Senior Administrator for PDS. This information was obtained from the staff interview.

The Project Development Services Consumers' Interview was also used to gather information to answer this evaluation question. Twenty-seven school administrators participated in the interview. Additional information was provided informally, throughout the evaluation process. An analysis of data gathered from these sources resulted in the identification of the following needs relative to PDS:

(1) There is a need to identify sources of funding for educational purposes and to provide information about these sources to OCPS consumers in an expedient manner.

(2) There is a need to identify the educational purposes for which funding is sought for each work location (e.g., school-site, district office, or support program). The effort for which funding is sought should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the work-location strategic plan.

(3) There is a need to identify the level of expertise of each work-location in regards to seeking financial resources.

In comparing the needs identified in the interview process with the objectives stated earlier, one objective was found to be closely associated with one of the identified needs. Objective f. and need (1) were similar because they both focused on the identification of funding sources. Needs (2) and (3) were not found to be addressed by the program objectives or operational activities related to the objectives.

Conclusions

While each of the seven program objectives stated for Project Development Services was found to address the ongoing operation of PDS, only one objective was found to address a need identified by school administrators. This need is stated in the following: There is a need to identify sources of funding for educational purposes and to provide information about these sources to OCPS consumers in an expedient manner.

The other two needs identified by school administrators were not found to be addressed by the program objectives or operational activities related to the objectives. These needs are stated in the following:

(1) There is a need to identify the educational purposes for which funding is sought for each work location (e.g., school-site, district office, or support program). The effort for which funding is sought should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the work-location strategic plan.

(2) There is a need to identify the level of expertise of each work-location in regards to seeking financial resources.

Recommendation

The objectives of Project Development Services should be rewritten to address the needs identified by school administrators.

Evaluation Question 4

Are there satisfactory operational guidelines, and are they available to all personnel in the program?

Results

Three types of operational guidelines were reviewed over the course of the evaluation. Each set of guidelines was reviewed at the time it was presented in a workshop, if it was the focus of PDS efforts, or when it was prepared for publication. The documents are discussed in the order reviewed.

Guidelines for the Superintendent's Competitive Grant. These guidelines were developed to assist "schools and units" in applying for funds from the Chapter II Superintendent's Competitive Grant. For the 1991-92 school year, the focus of the grant was "the use of educational technology for greater productivity and/or any other approach that [would] lead to education gains for students through a more efficient use of resources."

A guidelines packet was presented to workshop participants as part of the process for introducing and explaining the Superintendent's Competitive Grant. The guidelines were presented as part of a two-part workshop. In the first part, workshop participants were introduced to the grant-application process; the second part of the workshop was a question-answer session which followed the first workshop by one month.

Each packet contained a booklet with information for the completion of individual sections of the Superintendent's Competitive Grant. Examples were provided to clarify specific requirements (e.g., developing a needs statement and creating evaluation criteria). Copies of the overhead transparencies used in the workshop were also part of the packet.

The review conducted by the evaluator indicated that the packet was thorough providing the necessary information to apply for the Superintendent's Competitive Grant. A follow-up interview conducted with five workshop participants indicated that the guidelines were adequate for completing the Superintendent's Competitive Grant application. Two concerns were identified by the participants interviewed: (a) the packet only applied to the Superintendent's Competitive Grant and did not provide assistance in the preparation of grants in general and (b) the one and one-half hour presentation in the first workshop should not have required the involvement of five administrative staff members.

Special Projects Administration Catalogue. This document is lengthy, comprised of 367 pages. Each year, a new document is prepared to reflect the total grant awards for the district from the previous year.

The catalogue contains four sections. In the first section, the grant-awarded projects are listed by title, followed by a listing by assigned project number, and then by school or department. The fourth section contains "Special Project Information" such as the title, funding information, OCPS information, and a brief description.

Because the information in the document is dated, that is, it is a year old when it is published, it was not found to be as helpful as it would have been if it were current information. The information presented in the introduction to the document also reflected the section organization from the year before. Current project descriptive information is maintained by the PDS secretary using a computer database.

Grants and special projects administration information. This collection of information includes more than written documents. It also addresses the meeting to orient new project administrators regarding their responsibilities for the project. Documents explained during the meeting were the "Special Project Authorization and Staffing Form," the "Consultant Agreement and Payment Form," the Grants and Special Projects Administration Manual, the "Special Project Budget Amendment Form," the "Special Project Information" sheet, and the submitted grant proposal. All information was neatly organized in an attractive folder.

To observe and participate in the orientation process, the program evaluator was invited to one of the orientation meetings. The orientation meeting was approximately one hour in duration. Presentations were organized and the two staff members were well prepared to present about the specific grant. Questions asked by the project administrator and principal were thoroughly answered.

Mid-year, the revised Grant and Special Project Administration Manual was reviewed as part of the PDS evaluation. The contents of this document raised many questions, especially related to the relationship between the Project Administration unit within Project Development Services (PA/PDS) and the Project Administration section within Business Services (PA/BS). This document was the first evidence to suggest that a duplication of efforts was occurring with the PA/PDS unit duplicating the work which was undertaken by the PA/BS unit. The document, however, further implied that PDS was superordinate to and responsible for the work of the PA/BS. This implication made the lines of communication between the PA/BS and the project administrators at the funded site cumbersome in that the project administrators were being directed to communicate with PDS who would then function as an intermediary with PA/BS on behalf of the project administrator. This role was not found to be necessary.

A joint meeting held between PA/BS and PA/PDS helped the evaluator to conclude that numerous efforts were being duplicated. As the activities of PA/PDS were being discussed, the PA/BS personnel confirmed that all functions except one were also conducted and had been initiated by PA/BS. The function not performed by PA/BS dealt with visiting the projects to monitor the project's implementation and evaluation efforts. Further investigation of the evaluation component suggested that the ATAs who were assigned from PA/PDS had been specially trained to monitor budgets; however, they were not trained to be able to monitor the attainment of instructional objectives.

When comparing the previous and revised administration manuals, many of the corrections and recommendations made for the new document were found to be concerns in the older document as well. An editing process allowing for the thorough analysis of the document was reported to have been initiated with the PA/BS section; however, the PA/BS editing feedback was not used in revising the document. Inconsistencies with practices and procedures for the business services area were noted in the manual by the senior manager for PA/BS and reported to the evaluator. As the evaluator conducted a thorough review of the document, it became more and more apparent that the information contained in the document needed further review.

Other concerns identified by the evaluator related to how information was being presented in the manual. For example, in a section titled "Crimes" it lists activities prohibited by law as kickbacks, bribery, fraud, etc. and follows by stating that the "project manager must refrain from engaging in such activities." This statement may be interpreted to suggest that a perception of dishonesty persists about project administrators. Another concern addresses the technical language of the document; it was noted that in some areas the document is too technical and may, as a result, become less useful.

Conclusions

Three types of operational guidelines were reviewed. The Guidelines for the Superintendent's Competitive Grant were found to be satisfactory; however, workshop participants reported that the assistance provided by these guidelines could not be generalized to other grant-writing situations. Workshop attendants also commented that more efficient use of administrator manpower should be demonstrated (e.g., having five presenters for a one and one-half hour workshop did not reflect the appropriate use of administrator time).

The Special Projects Administration Catalogue which is a large, cumbersome collection of very brief descriptions of district projects from the previous year was not found to serve a useful purpose. It does offer a historical review; however, similar information is maintained on a computer data base and could be downloaded to disk or hard copy on an annual basis. The cost of typing and copying the document did not appear to be justified by its use.

The Grant and Special Project Administration Manual identified that the Project Administration unit within Project Development Services (PA/PDS) was duplicating almost all of the efforts performed by Project Administration within Business Services (PA/BS). This document also was found to suggest that PA/BS was subordinate and responsible to PA/PDS. In referencing the district organizational charts, the program evaluator did not find a line-of-supervision between PA/BS and PA/PDS. Concerns with the document related to inconsistencies with practices and procedures of PA/BS and how information was stated. These concerns could have been avoided by implementing a comprehensive revision-review process.

Recommendations

1. A manual to guide the writing of grants, in general, which is modeled after the Guidelines for the Superintendent's Competitive Grant, should be developed.

2. A log of current district projects should be maintained on a computer data base and downloaded annually so that a historical record can be maintained. The publication of the voluminous Special Projects Administration Catalogue should be discontinued.

3. The working relationship between the Project Administration section within Business Services and the project administration activities performed by Project Development Services should be clarified to eliminate the duplication of services and the confusion regarding information communicated to project administrators. It is strongly recommended that overlapping services be performed by the Project Administration section within the Business Services Team.

4. Procedures to guide project administrators in the administration of grants should be developed. The current Grant and Special Project Administration Manual should be referenced as a resource document. This responsibility should be addressed by the Business Services Team.

Evaluation Question 5

Is Project Development Services, consisting of the Project Development and Project Administration units, implementing services according to the PDS design?

Results

Since the program objectives were rewritten to direct the focus of Project Development Services on the mission of the work unit, this evaluation question was investigated by determining the degree to which the program objectives were met. The 27 school administrators who participated in the interview were asked to rate the degree to which these objectives were met. The results are presented in the following table.

Table 1

Percentage of School Administrators Reporting the Degree to Which Project Development Services Program Objectives Were Met (N = 27)

	Objective	Degree of Achievement			
		Fully	Partially Met	Not Met	Not Aware
a.	To develop, implement, and maintain a grant proposal development system	33	48	7	11
b.	To develop, implement, and maintain a management and assessment system for funded projects	56	30		15
c.	To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and funding agencies on the federal, state, and local levels	22	30	11	37
d.	To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and public service agencies with whom the OCPS works collaboratively	11	26	7	56
e.	To develop alternative approaches for predicting and determining educational trends in the context of the political arena and other intervening factors in order to advocate for and fund the educational needs of the OCPS	19	26	11	44
f.	To identify new sources of funding for educational needs	19	50	4	27
g.	To develop a team approach for the provision of Project Development Services	42	19	4	37

A criterion most often applied to these data is to hold that for an objective to be met 75% of the group will respond that the objective is fully or partially met. Applying this rule, only objectives a. and b. were met. For the remainder of the objectives, the respondents reported that they were not aware of the function being an objective of PDS more often than they reported that the objective was not met.

As reported in Evaluation Question 3, the PDS objectives are not consistent with the expressed needs of the schools. Therefore, although objective a. is reported to be fully or partially met by 81% of the school administrators, the means by which this objective is being carried out does not appear to be sensitive to the needs of the schools.

The role of the PDS section as it relates to project administration (i.e., objective b.) was discussed in Evaluation Question 4. Following the recommendation made there, this objective was determined to be the function of Business Services.

Regarding objective c., a survey was conducted with grant reviewers at the state level to determine the perceptions reviewers have about the Orange County Public Schools. The reviewers reported that the grants, in general, which were written by the Project Development Services unit were easily identifiable as Orange County products in that they were not focused on student outcomes and were not written from the school-level perspective. They suggested first focusing on student outcomes and then planning how those outcomes would be achieved. State-level foundation representatives reported a desire to have school districts identify needs school-by-school and community-by-community. The reviewers indicated that the grants did not appear to be written by educators, people who had a keen sense of what was happening in classrooms.

Another concern reported by grant reviewers at the state level was that the only contact reported on the grant application was the Associate Superintendent for Planning and Governmental Relations. This was reported to frustrate grant reviewers when they wanted to contact the submitting site for clarification.

As reported in Evaluation Question 2, the relationships between and among members of the PDS staff need to be strengthened, especially among the members of the Project Administration unit. These efforts will help to achieve objective g.

Conclusions

To determine if Project Development Services (PDS) was implementing services according to the design, the degree to which PDS met the seven stated objectives was investigated via the school administrator interview. A review of the results suggested that school administrators are not aware of all the functions performed by PDS. A finding of Evaluation Question 3 was that the PDS objectives do not address two of the three needs addressed by the schools. This would suggest developing a closer communication with the schools and a systematic means to obtain input from the school level regarding PDS functions. As recommended earlier, the objective relating to project administration should be discontinued as a function of PDS, and the relationships between and among members of the PDS staff should be strengthened.

Input from the state-level grant reviewers indicated the need for OCPS grants to focus on student outcomes, to write from the school perspective, and to include the name of a contact person who had specific knowledge of the grant submitted. State-level foundation representatives reported a desire to have school districts identify needs school-by-school and community-by-community. This latter request will be met through the strategic planning process for school improvement.

Recommendations

Recommendations implied in the conclusions section of this evaluation question which were stated earlier are not repeated here.

1. Closer communication and a systematic means to obtain input from the school level regarding PDS functions should be developed.

2. Efforts should be taken to develop grant applications for schools which are unique, reflecting the individuality of schools.

3. Grant application contact persons who have specific knowledge of the grant submitted should be identified on the grant applications.

Evaluation Question 6

What means are used to incorporate an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of work provided by the Project Development Services staff, and how is this information used?

Results

During the Project Development Services Staff Interview each PDS member was asked "What means are used to incorporate an ongoing assessment of the of the quality and productivity of work provided by the PDS staff?" Each response was somewhat different.

Four staff members indicated that they were not aware of an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of their work; two of the staff members were from the Project Development unit and two of the staff members were from the Project Administration unit. While one grant writer reported that progress was monitored by maintaining a log to indicate the progress of writing a grant in the Project Development unit, the other two grant writers reported that they shared information about their work with their administrator on a regular basis.

One of the three ATAs working in the Project Administration unit reported maintaining a log on each project. Another member of that unit reported maintaining a calendar and checklist for self-accountability. The administrator for Project Administration reported checking the budgets of the various projects.

Conclusions

A systematic means of conducting an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of work provided by the Project Development Services section was not reported by the staff members interviewed.

Recommendations

1. A systematic means of conducting an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of work provided by the Project Development Services section should be implemented.

2. Special efforts should be taken via the assessment process to communicate a respect for the individual worth of each staff member in the Project Development Services section.

Evaluation Question 7

Is the environment – including management, facilities, equipment, and materials and supplies – satisfactory for the provision of Project Development Services?

Results

While the Project Development Services staff members reported the facilities, equipment, and supplies and materials to be satisfactory for the provision of PDS, three members reported that the management was not satisfactory.

When asked to report about their concerns regarding the work unit, staff members indicated the need to improve morale; to improve teaming and the management of the team; to move away from subgroups; to move away from pettiness and not getting along; to improve consideration, appreciation, and communication; and to maintain a high level of work standards. These concerns were interpreted to reflect the need for stronger leadership in the work unit.

Comments made during the course of the evaluation suggest that PDS has an excess of equipment, specifically typewriters, which could be better utilized if given to schools. Also, some of the recommendations presented in staff meetings for the purchase of expensive equipment did not appear to be justified by need but rather by want.

Conclusions

While the facilities, equipment, and supplies and materials were found to be satisfactory for the provision of Project Development Services, the concerns of the staff members strongly suggest that the leadership efforts within PDS needed to be improved. Project Development Services staff members reported an excess of equipment which could be better utilized if given to schools. The purchase of expensive equipment by the PDS section was not found to be closely monitored.

Recommendations

Recommendations implied in the conclusions section of this evaluation question which were stated earlier are not repeated here.

1. Efforts should be taken to strengthen the leadership within Project Development Services.

2. Excess equipment located at Project Development Services should be transferred to schools.

3. Purchases of equipment within Project Development Services should be closely monitored.

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APPENDIX A

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF SURVEY INTERVIEW

Name:_____

1. What is your role in Project Development Services? How has it changed as a result of the reorganization? Have you received any reorganization guidelines? If so, what are they? Are these guidelines in a written format?

2. How are you working to achieve the following objectives:

   a. To develop, implement, and maintain a grant proposal development system
   b. To develop, implement, and maintain a management and assessment system for funded projects
   d. To develop alternative approaches for predicting and determining educational trends in the context of the political arena and other intervening factors in order to advocate for and fund the educational needs of the OCPS
   f. To develop a team approach for the provision of Project Development Services

   Do you think these objectives are appropriate?

2. How do you receive direction regarding your work assignments? Is this a group effort or are assignments delegated individually?

3. To whom do you report?

4. Show me (Tell me about) what you are currently working on? Whom are you working with on this project?

5. Tell me about the interaction you have had with other members of the PDS staff. Has your work been conducted differently this year? What alternative approaches to doing business have you been involved with?

6. If you have a concern regarding working on a project, whom would you go to for assistance?

7. Other than yourself, whom would you consider the most knowledgeable person about your work?

8. If you have a strong feeling about something you are working on and you want to do some perception checking, to whom would you go to bounce off your ideas?

9. There was a discussion about work standards at your last staff meeting. What is a work standard? Can you give an example? Whose work standards do you think would be most like your own?

10. To whom would you go to for personal advice?

11. If you had to work with three other people to group brainstorm a problem and arrive at a solution, which three people would you select?

12. You are a member of Team A, B, and C. Tell me about the activities that you have been involved with which include the other team members.

13. Tell me about group activities you are involved with in writing or in the administration of projects?

14. How would you like to see the PDS unit change?

15. Have you met the proposal development benchmarks set for yourself?

16. Where are you regarding the achievement of the activities assigned to you in the strategic plan?

17. How have you been involved in the concept-paper development process?

18. What means are used to incorporate an ongoing assessment of the quality and productivity of work provided by the PDS staff?

19. Is the environment -- including management, facilities, equipment, and materials and supplies -- satisfactory for the provision of Project Development Services?

20. What are your concerns regarding your work unit?

APPENDIX B

PDS CONSUMERS' INTERVIEW

Name:_____

1. How do you become aware of grants/incentives for your school?

2. Project Development Services is responsible for assisting schools with locating grant monies, writing or assisting in the writing of grants, processing grant applications, and assisting with the management of the grant once the monies have been awarded. How have you been involved in this process? (Note: Development or Administration)

3. The following are the objectives of Project Development Services? From your vantage, to what degree are they being met?

   a. To develop, implement, and maintain a grant proposal development system (Atwood)

   Fully Met__Partially Met_Not Met__Not Aware___

   b. To develop, implement, and maintain a management and assessment system for funded projects (Christopher)

   Fully Met__Partially Met_Not Met__Not Aware___

   c. To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and funding agencies on the federal, state, and local levels.

   Fully Met__Partially Met_Not Met__Not Aware___

   d. To establish and maintain an effective liaison process between the OCPS and public service agencies with whom the OCPS works collaboratively

   Fully Met__Partially Met_Not Met__Not Aware___

   e. To develop alternative approaches for predicting and determining educational trends in the context of the political arena and other intervening factors in order to advocate for and fund the educational needs of the OCPS

   Fully Met__Partially Met_Not Met__Not Aware___

   f. To identify new sources of funding for educational needs

   Fully Met__Partially Met_Not Met__Not Aware___

   g. To develop a team approach for the provision of Project Development Services

   Fully Met__Partially Met_Not Met__Not Aware___

4. Based on your previous experiences, what recommendations would you make for the improvement of Project Development Services?